

## OVER THE AIR

GODDARD LIEBERSON

RADIO has done contemporary music some good turns lately. Columbia started a new series for Tuesday nights at 10:30-11:00 P.M. which, in the words of Mr. Frederick Bethel (director of the music division) "without trying to *prove* anything . . . will run the gamut from Tin Pan Alley to Aaron Copland and other symphonic writers, with many unknown and little known writers in between. . ." The series is called "Musical Americana" with orchestras playing under the direction of Howard Barlow, Freddie Rich, Mark Warnow, Leith Stevens, and others. Mr. Rich gave Robert McBride a roaring performance of his (McBride's) *Workout*; a piece that well utilizes all of Rich's symphonic jazz orchestra's means. Also on Columbia, *Everybody's Music*, a Sunday afternoon program at 3 o'clock, will play the world premieres of the compositions which, written specifically for radio were commissioned from six American composers. These are: a symphonic work by Howard Hanson; William Grant Still's choral and orchestral sketches, *Lenox Avenue*; Roy Harris' *Time Suite*; Walter Piston's *Concertino for Piano and Chamber Orchestra*; Louis Gruenberg's new radio opera, *Green Mansions*; and Aaron Copland's *Radio Serenade*. Columbia brought most of the Coolidge Festival over the air, including a first performance of Jerzy Fitelberg's *Quartet No. 4*, the prize winning chamber music selection for 1936 on the Coolidge awards. This work of rather huge proportions, didn't give itself to broadcasting in the most desirable fashion.

A factual report from the General Motors Company regarding their Sunday evening programs reached the apogee for unwarranted boasting. They make the claim of playing "many works, *seldom if ever* (their italics) heard," which list includes: Ravel's *Alborado del Gracioso*, *La Valse* and *Rhapsodie Espagnole*; Stravinsky's *The Firebird*, *Le Baiser de la Fée*, and *Petrouchka*; Kodaly's *Hary Janos*; De Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance*

and *Three Cornered Hat*; Bach's *Concerto for Two Violins*; Boughton's *The Immortal Hour*; Griffes' *White Peacock*, etc., etc. No skating on thin ice for General Motors!

The National Broadcasting Company found time for some unusual if not always interesting programs. From Turin, Italy, they brought an Ottorino Respighi memorial concert; from Lithuania, a program of that country's music; from London, Vaughan Williams' salute to the new King of England, *Flourish for a Coronation*, and on the same program, the extremely flat *Overture to a Picaresque Comedy* by Arnold Bax, also Delius' *Suite Florida*; finally from Czechoslovakia, a memorial program of the music of Leos Janacek. A very important musical aspect of the National Broadcasting Company is found in the productions of the Music Guild. Under the auspices of the League of Composers, they presented movements from the quartets of Ravel and Bloch, and songs by Durey, Milhaud, Stravinsky, and Ravel. The Music Guild also sponsored a series titled "Four Centuries of Polish Music" and the Roth Quartet playing Daniel Gregory Mason's *Serenade*. Parts of the American Chamber Music Society's spring festival concerts were broadcast, bringing to the radio audience Roger Session's new quartet, a quartet by Arthur Foote, and Roy Harris' quintet. The Eastman School's Spring Festival was also sent over the air, giving us a chance to view this year's Prix de Rome winning composition, Frederick Wolman's *Songs for Autumn*, which proved to be an ample comment on what it now takes to win this honor, once so coveted in the past.

You may be interested in the following list of contemporary music which has found place on the programs of Alfred Wallenstein for WOR: Hindemith's *Funeral Music for George V* for viola and orchestra, three of Milhaud's *Cinq Sinfonies*, Ernst Toch's *Bunte Suite*, Shostakovitch's *Prelude and Scherzo*, *Latvian Peasant Dances* by Kalnins, *Poème* for viola and orchestra by the Hollander, Leo Ruygrok, and Vaughan Williams' *Charterhouse Suite*. It is a worthy record.